

TODAY'S FARM

Farming is the practice of growing plants and raising animals for food. Many years ago, most farms were small and farmers grew crops and raised a variety of animals. But times have changed, and farms can look vastly different today.

So many farm terms – **WHAT** do they all mean?

These titles are not mutually exclusive. For example, there are organic corporate farms and conventional, modern, corporate farms.



SMALL TRADITIONAL FARMS

Traditional farming focused on growing a variety of crops and raising a variety of farm animals. For instance, a farmer in 1950 may have grown oats, wheat and barley and raised small numbers of chickens, beef cattle, pigs and dairy cattle. There are still some farmers who have small farms and use traditional practices, but most of these are referred to as **hobby farms**.



MODERN FARMS

Modern farming or **modern agriculture** involves adopting advances in science and technology to grow crops and raise animals.



CONVENTIONAL FARMS

Most farmers make decisions about how to farm and what to grow based on the newest developments in markets, technology and science. They consider which developments in the areas of crops, fertilizers and pesticides (both natural and synthetic) would be the most beneficial for their farms. This type of farming is called **conventional farming**.

Over 98% of farmers in Canada farm conventionally.¹



CORPORATE FARMS

Many farms are incorporated for business reasons in order to allow family members to participate in the farm business. Incorporated farms are different from publicly traded multinational corporations and businesses.

Over 97% of Canadian farms are family owned² and many are also incorporated.

Farms are also classified by what they grow or raise. Some examples include **livestock farms** that raise animals, **fruit farms** or **orchards** that grow fruit, **grain farms**, **fish farms**, **vegetable farms** and **flower farms**.

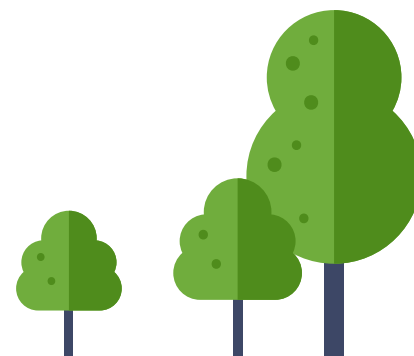


ORGANIC FARMS

Organic farming involves raising animals and growing crops using only naturally occurring or "organic" inputs. To be labelled and marketed as "organic", food must be grown by farmers who are certified as organic producers under Canada's Organic Products Regulations.³



Computer screens in a tractor - today's farms are high tech.



TODAY'S FARM

What's required to be a farmer today?

Growing food requires a lot of technical information. Much of what a farmer knows is passed down from generation to generation and is a culmination of years of practical experience. Many farmers build on that knowledge through further education. More than 50% of farmers in Canada have university level education and study their entire careers to stay on top of advances in agriculture.⁴

Farming today is specialized

Every type of farming requires a great deal of specific knowledge, as well as specialized equipment. Farmers have to be as cost-efficient and as productive as possible with the resources they have (equipment, land, number of workers, etc.) in order to make a living. This translates into focusing on raising specific animals or growing specific crops. Location and markets are also important. For example, dairy farms are often located near cities because that's where they sell their milk.



Using a drone to check corn crop

The type and size of farm isn't as important as the care and commitment that people who live and work on it demonstrate for their land, animals and the environment.⁵

MODERN AGRICULTURE IS INNOVATIVE

Farmers rely on the latest scientific research to grow crops and raise animals. Between 2011 and 2013, about half of Canadian farms (48%) adopted at least one type of new or significantly improved product, process or practice.⁶

Farming: a huge investment

Much of a farmer's money is tied up in farm land and equipment. On average, for every dollar a farm receives from farming, 83 cents is expenses.⁸ The 2016 Census of Agriculture found that 44.4% of all farmers did some off-farm work, usually as a means of supplementing their total income.⁹



Farms are generally bigger and more productive than they were 100 years ago. Whereas a small farm in 1900 could grow enough food for about 10 people, today, the average Canadian farm produces enough food for more than 120 people.⁷ That's about a 1,100% increase in food production that feeds people all over the world!

